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INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 6271
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 7500

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: CHINA'S ANTI-SATELLITE MISSILE TEST,
U.S.-JAPAN ALLIANCE

11. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their coverage January 24 on the debt-ridden Rebar Asia Pacific Group; on the government's move Tuesday to publicize the names of certain non-performing borrowers; on the Donald Keyser case; and on the Presidential Office Allowance for State Affairs case. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-status quo "China Times" discussed China's recent anti-satellite missile test, saying "the move has foretold the ongoing formation of a new international strategic landscape and the emergence of a new form of warfare." A commentary in the limited-circulation, pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" by former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state Randall Schriver, on the other hand, commented on the evolving U.S.-Japan alliance and its impact on Taiwan's security. End summary.

12. China's Anti-Satellite Missile Test

"Taiwan Needs to Remain Aware that the Strategic Environment Has Undergone Big Changes"

The pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (1/24):

"Beijing's anti-satellite missile test-fired on January 11 has shocked the world, and international concerns [over this incident] continue to grow. No matter how Beijing kept silent or reiterated its position, the move has foretold the ongoing formation of a new international strategic landscape and the emergence of a new form of warfare. ...

"Washington's concern over China's anti-satellite missile test rests on two levels: the strategic and the tactical. On the strategic level, the United States wants to know why Beijing test-fired the missile in a situation where the bilateral relations between the two remain stable? Was it a move authorized by Hu Jintao, or was it a decision made unilaterally by the [Chinese] military? [An answer to this question] is essential, as it directly affects whether the strategic dialogue between the two countries will be carried out faithfully. ...

"For its test-firing of anti-satellite weapons this time, Beijing chose directly to 'destroy' its own obsolete weather satellite. Who gave the order [to do so]? Why did China choose such an intense approach that was easily detected and will surely trigger a backlash from the international community? Perhaps one will never find answers to these questions. But one thing is certain, namely, Beijing already has the capability to challenge the United States' supremacy in space. This threatening image is the last thing the U.S. military wants to see, but it has arrived earlier than expected. [The U.S. military] cannot accept it mentally, but will have to factor it in strategically. ..."

13. U.S.-Japan Alliance

"US-Japan Pact Matters to Taiwan"

Randall Schriver, former U.S. deputy assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs, opined in the pro-independence, English-language "Taipei Times" [circulation: 30,000] (1/24):

"The US-Japan alliance is evolving. This is partly as a result of internal developments in Japan, and partly in response to dynamic change in Asia. Political leaders in Taiwan should take note of this evolution as the future course of the US-Japan alliance may have a direct impact on Taiwan's security. ... Also embedded in this approach is an assumption that the people of Taiwan support a similar vision to that of the US and Japan for how to best promote an environment conducive to peace. Taipei needs to send the right signals to ensure Washington and Tokyo will understand that Taiwan stands beside them. Over the near term, Taiwan should take steps to strengthen its own defenses, improve its democracy and governance and develop a plan for positive engagement with China, including approval of direct links. Such steps would be well-received by the US, Japan and the region.

"The US-Japan alliance will continue to shape Asia's future. But one can imagine two very different potential futures for Asia depending on how the alliance orients itself toward the region - the alliance can choose to be insular, narrow and limited in its regional engagement, or a proactive force for positive development in the economic, political and security spheres. I strongly endorse an activist agenda that rests confidently in the proposition that Asia and its people will be far better off for a US-Japan alliance that embraces a robust agenda for shaping Asia. Taiwan can and should help."

YOUNG